

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-5, 7-12, 14, 15, 25-29, 31-36, and 38-41 are pending in the application, with 1 and 25 being the independent claims. Claims 6, 13, 30, and 37 are sought to be cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Claims 1, 12, 14, 25, 33, 36, 38, and 39 are sought to be amended. The new claims 16-32 added by amendment on June 26, 2002, have been renumbered herein as claims 25-41, respectively. As described below, the foregoing amendment places the application in even better form for allowance or appeal. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 1-9, 12, 15, 25-33, 36, and 39-41

In paragraph 3, on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 12, 15, 25-33, 36, and 39-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,194,794 to Lampe et al. (hereinafter Lampe), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,039,975 to Peticolas (hereinafter Peticolas). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant has cancelled claims 6 and 30 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Thus, the rejection of these claims are moot.

In order to put the present application in condition for allowance, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 25 so that they each now contain allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner in paragraph 6, on page 5 of the Office Action. Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include the allowable features of dependent claim 13 and intermediate claim 6. As amended, independent claim 1 is equivalent to rewriting claim 13 in independent form. Applicant has amended independent claim 25 to include the allowable features of dependent claim 37 and intermediate claim 30. As amended, independent claim

25 is equivalent to rewriting claim 37 in independent form. Thus, as amended, independent claims 1 and 25 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-5, 7-9, 12, 15, 25-29, 30-33, 36, and 39-41 depend, either directly or indirectly, from one of allowable independent claims 1 and 25. Thus, claims 2-5, 7-9, 12, 15, 25-29, 30-33, 36, and 39-41 are patentable for at least the same reasons that independent claims 1 and 25 are patentable.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

In paragraph 1, on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that a previously filed information disclosure statement was not considered because a copy of each listed reference was not provided. Applicant re-filed an information disclosure statement on January 28, 2003, and included copies of the listed references. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner initial and return a copy of each of the filed forms PTO-1449, and indicate in the official file wrapper of this patent application that the documents have been considered.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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